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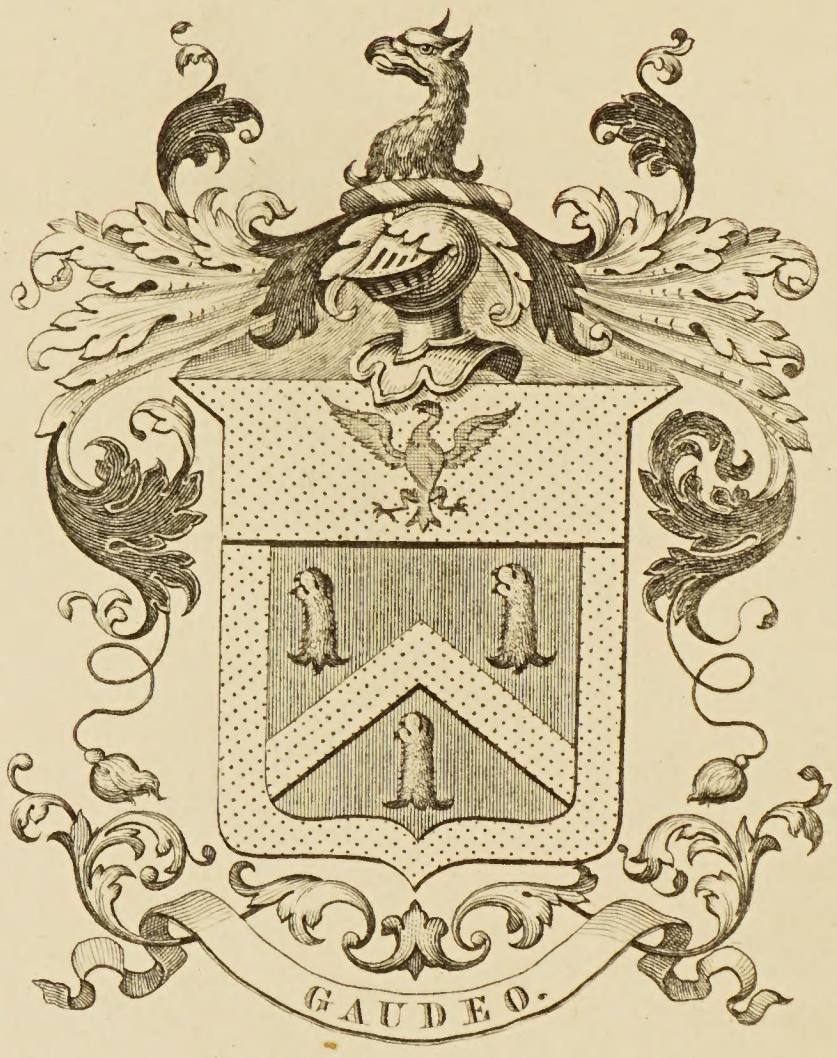

John Carter Brown.

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

STATE

OF THE

SUGAR ISLANDS.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

Rich. fo. 193.

RPJCB

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

STATE

OF THE

SUGAR ISLANDS,

AND ON THE

POLICY OF ENABLING FOREIGNERS

TO

LEND MONEY ON REAL SECURITIES

IN THOSE COLONIES.

IN A

LETTER ADDRESSED

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD NORTH

BY A

WEST-INDIA PLANTER.

LONDON:

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M. DCC. LXXIII.

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RPJCB

JOHN CARTER BROWN.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

STATE OF THE SUGAR ISLANDS, &c.

MY LORD,

I BEG leave to lay before your lordſhip ſome conſiderations on the ſtate of the ſugar iſlands, and on the policy of an act, which has been moved for in the Houſe of Commons, to enable foreigners to lend money on real ſecurities in thoſe colonies; which, I flatter myſelf, will not be diſagreeable to your lordſhip, at a time when ſuch a law is ardently wiſhed for by ſome, and ſtrongly oppoſed by others.

Barbadoes, and ſeveral of the windward Caribbee iſlands in America, were, early in the reign of king Charles I, granted to the earl of Carliſle, who ſent out a governor, and endeavoured to ſettle them, by granting the lands, under terms of cultivation, to ſuch as would

hazard their lives and fortunes in a climate then extremely unfavourable to European conſtitutions. The firſt grant, of any conſequence, was to a company of merchant adventures, for ten thouſand acres in Barbadoes, containing the ſpot on which the preſent town of St. Michael, or Bridge Town, is built, and the greateſt part of the pariſh of St. Michael. The conditions of their grant were, to aſſiſt the governors in maintaining peace and good order in the iſland, and to pay to the earl of Carliſle, and his heirs for ever, five *per cent.* of all the profits. Soon afterwards, lord Carliſle, and his governors, who were impowered by him, granted many other parcels of land, as well in Barbadoes, as in the other iſlands, to ſuch as applied for them, ſome reſerving greater, and others leſs rents than thoſe to which the merchants land was ſubject. The ſettlers were, in general, men of enterprizing ſpirit, but of ſmall fortune. Every ſtep was taken to make thoſe countries, then in a woody and uncultivated ſtate, of real uſe and profit to this kingdom: but, notwithſtanding all the endeavours of the earl of Carliſle, and of thoſe who held under him, the ſettlements went on but very ſlowly, and never yielded any profitable returns till the civil wars broke out in England: Then, gentlemen of ample fortune, who either deteſted the meaſures, or dreaded the reſentment of government, left their native land, and, in ſwarms, went over to the colonies; where the magic power of their riches ſoon converted the dreary inhoſpitable woods into clear and fertile plains. For many years England was diſtracted with two parties,

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the Royaliſts and Parliamentarians, who alternately prevailed and perſecuted each other. The ſultry climes of the torrid zone, with freedom and ſafety, were then preferred to that of Britain, by conſiderable numbers of each in their turn. Barbadoes, which was our firſt and beſt ſettled iſland in America, had the good fortune to receive many men of the moſt ancient families and large eſtates in the weſtern counties of England; and, ſuch was the happy effects of her mild and peace-inſpiring air, that Cavaliers and Roundheads forgot thoſe odious names, which in their own country, had been bred by hatred, and kept alive by party ſpirit; and, as perſons embarked in the ſame bottom and engaged in the ſame purſuit, joined with one accord in cultivating the ſoil and in adorning their *altera patria* Such a temper and diſpoſition could not fail of being properly rewarded. The ſoil, then new and luxuriant, afforded abundance of raw materials for manufacture: and a commercial ſpirit having ſucceeded to that unhappy rage which deſolated this kingdom, their produce was carried to England, and ſold at a very high price; by which means they became extremely rich. Their wealth increaſed to ſuch a degree, and they were ſo reſpectable in themſelves, that king Charles II, in one day, created twelve of them baronets, who had then eſtates there, yielding from two thouſand to twelve thouſand pounds *per annum*. This happy improvement was not, however, effected without an immenſe expence to the private adventurers, and the greateſt favour and indulgence on the part of government.

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In the year 1661, the crown purchaſed the right of the earl of Carliſle from the earl of Kinoul his heir at law, and lord Willoughby, of Parham, was ſent out governor, with full power and authority, by letters patent under the broad ſeal of England, to grant and confirm to the inhabitants, all lands, tenements and hereditaments, under his majeſty's ſeal appointed for Barbadoes and the leeward iſlands. In conſequence of which, and of royal inſtructions in favour of the ſettlers, they had a full confirmation of all their grants, paying, for ever afterwards to the crown, four and an half *per cent.* of the dead produce of their lands that ſhould be ſhipped off the iſland, in lieu of all rents and duties before reſerved and payable. Hence the origin of the four and an half *per cent.* duty. This impoſt, by the law which gave it to the crown, was to be applied, in the firſt place, in building a priſon and ſeſſions-houſe, and to ſome other public uſes of Barbadoes. All the lands granted afterwards, in that iſland, were given by the crown in free and common ſoccage, ſubject to the four and an half *per cent.* duty only, without any other conſideration; and though an exception was made, in the act, of the merchants land, which, therefore, was left on the original footing of the grant from the earl of Carliſle, yet the crown, afterwards, by deeds made between the governors and the tenants of the land, releaſed the ſame from the conditions and rents reſerved, in conſideration of four and an half *per cent.* of the dead profits that ſhould be ſhipped off the iſland, which, by ſuch deeds, was agreed to

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be paid for ever; whereby the produce of the whole iſland, without exception, became liable to the duty.

The ſettlers in the iſland of Antigua had their grants confirmed to them for the like duty of four and an half *per cent*; which, as they paid no money for their lands, was given as an indemnification to government for the expences it had been at in reconquering that iſland from the French.

Jamaica was conquered from the Spaniards during the uſurpation; and although the greateſt part of the cultivable lands there was given by the crown to its ſubjects, yet, to this moment, that iſland is unincumbered with the four and an half *per cent.* duty: the inhabitants wiſely declined laying it upon themſelves, and the miniſtry have not yet thought proper to impoſe it by royal authority.

No part of the old iſlands was ſold by the crown, excepting the half of St. Chriſtopher's, which the French originally ſettled, and which was conquered from them. The lands there, having been cultivated before they were ceded, the purchaſers were not put to the trouble and expence of ſettling new plantations; but had immediate returns for the money which they paid for their eſtates. Even in that caſe, government did not think fit, of its own authority, to impoſe the four and an half *per cent.* duty.

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The protection and assistance given by government to the sugar colonies did honour to the ministry of those times, and shew, that they not only knew, but likewise, promoted the true interest of the kingdom. Far from oppressing the enterprizing adventurer, or looking with an invidious eye on the success of his labours, they took a particular pleasure in beholding him in a thriving state: and the sovereign also, by conferring honours on those who had contributed so largely, by their fortune and industry, to the increase of commerce and manufactures, raised a spirit of emulation in many others, which warmly led to colonization. The good effects were soon experienced in the amazing increase of shipping and commerce. England, which, at the time of king Charles's grant to the earl of Carlisle, had but two vessels of three hundred tons belonging to her whole trade, soon saw the Atlantick covered with fleets of larger ships, transporting her produce and manufactures to the plantations, and bringing home their raw materials in return. Barbadoes alone, it is computed, brought a clear profit of an hundred thousand pounds to this kingdom in twenty years after that island became the object of royal favour and attention; and the rest of the islands, being equally indulged, soon attained a degree of perfection that enabled them to make grateful returns for the many benefits they had received.

The old sugar islands being thus settled, the proprietors of the lands went on successfully; and at the same time that they continued enriching themselves

themſelves, they daily encreaſed the navigation and commerce of Great Britain. Thoſe iſlands too, conſuming the produce of the northern colonies, which the mother country did not ſtand in need of, occaſioned a ſpeedy increaſe of population and cultivation on the continent.

This, my lord, is a ſhort but juſt account of the ſettlement of the old iſlands; from which it appears, that the firſt ſugar colonies owe their very being to the troubles of the mother country, which drove many of her beſt ſons to ſeek a retreat for themſelves and their fortunes beyond the tropic. None but the rich, or induſtrious and enterprizing men, with the uſe of the wealth of others, could carry on and bring to perfection the ſettlement of ſugar plantations. It is to be obſerved alſo, that government, inſtead of laying burthens on the ſugar colonies, as they advanced in population, took off ſeveral rents and duties originally reſerved, which were found too heavy to be borne: and even, after being at a conſiderable expence for the ſupport and protection of thoſe iſlands, reduced all its claims to four and an half *per cent.* of the dead produce that ſhould be exported.

The limits which I have preſcribed to myſelf, will not ſuffer me to be more particular; but I could eaſily enumerate to your lordſhip many more inſtances of the favour and indulgence of government, from time to time, to thoſe ſettlements when in an infant ſtate.—Such tenderneſs and care as an affectionate parent would ſhew to his young and helpleſs offſpring. The conſequences

quences were, they came to maturity and flouriſhed.

I muſt now beg leave to call your lordſhip's attention to thoſe colonies which are commonly known under the denomination of the new iſlands.

Dominico, St. Vincent's and Tobago were for a century paſt claimed by us, and though the French diſputed our right for a long time, yet they quitted all pretenſions to thoſe iſlands by the laſt treaty of peace: then, and then only, a ſcheme was formed by government for ſettling them as ſugar colonies. A plan was deviſed, whereby the lands ſhould be laid out in lots not exceeding three hundred acres each in Dominico, and five hundred acres each in St. Vincent's and Tobago, and then put up to ſale at auction by commiſſioners for that purpoſe to be appointed by government; that the purchaſers ſhould pay down twenty *per cent.* of the purchaſe-money, and the reſt by inſtallments in the courſe of five years; that he ſhould be obliged to clear five acres in the hundred every year after the firſt, under a forfeiture of five pounds for every acre deficient; that he ſhould keep on the land a certain number of white-men or white-women, proportioned to the number of acres, under a forfeiture for every one that ſhould be wanting; and laſtly that he ſhould pay ſix-pence *per* acre quit-rent for all land that by the terms of ſale he ought to clear *under the penalty of five pounds for every ſix pence unpaid.* Accordingly the lands were ſet up to ſale by auction; and, excepting the diſtrict

diſtrict in St. Vincent's, claimed by the Caraibs, all the cultivable Lands were in the courſe of ſix years ſold to different purchaſers who were the higheſt bidders. At firſt the lands ſold very low, as the terms of ſale were very diſcouraging: but, when it was intimated that a performance of the conditions would not be rigorouſly inſiſted on by government, the prices gradually roſe, inſomuch, that from twenty ſhillings, the price which lands ſold *per* acre at the firſt ſales in Tobago, they got up ſo high as twelve pounds *per* acre at the laſt ſales; the riſe of price in the other iſlands even exceeded that in Tobago. People were induced to bid ſo largely, by the ſettlements having begun to take place, and the great proſpect there then was of the iſlands being properly ſupported under the protection of government, and by loans from the moried men here; till of late their expectations were not altogether diſappointed; for, men poſſeſſed of money, who had no particular ſchemes of trade to purſue, lent large ſums at the colony rate of intereſt, which is very high, to perſons who had the courage to become adventurers in the ſettlement of thoſe iſlands; and theſe laſt were riſing into conſequence and opulence, by the uſe of the riches of the former. Thus, two ſets of men were increaſing in wealth, by the cultivation of land, heretofore covered with woods, and of no uſe to the nation; while at the ſame time, they promoted the navigation, manufactures and commerce of the mother kingdom. But alas! what a ſad reverſe? By the late failures which have proved ſo fatal to the fortunes of the fatherleſs and widow, and ſo deſtructive to the

credit of many traders in this great metropolis, money is become of ſuch value here, that all the channels in which it uſed to flow to the colonies are ſtoped up; and the poor ſettler is left in the greateſt diſtreſs. His land, which before procured and kept up his credit, and afforded him the moſt pleaſing proſpect of ſucceſs, now is, as a mill-ſtone tied about his neck, likely to ſink him to deſtruction. All the labour he has beſtowed, and the money he has expended, is likely to be loſt to him, and to the public, for want of that ſupport and aſſiſtance which he expected in ſo arduous an undertaking. This is truly the caſe with thoſe who have begun their ſettlements, and made ſome progreſs, but have not brought their plantations to perfection, nor are able to do ſo without further loans. Thoſe who have ſettled plantations and are receiving returns, and thoſe who have not yet begun, nor laid out any money on their lands, are in very different ſituations. The former of theſe two laſt claſſes may be ſaid to have weathered the ſtorm in which ſo many adventurers are likely to be ſhipwrecked, and are now enjoying the profits of a long and dangerous, but ſucceſsful voyage. The laſt claſs, which is by much the moſt numerous, have been preparing to put to ſea, in hopes of the like ſucceſs, but now, finding their little barks too weak to ſtand the ſhock of the hurricanes and whirlwinds which they muſt encounter, rather abandon their bottoms to the mercy of the elements, than riſque their ſmall fortunes on an adventure which they cannot even hope to ſucceed in, without that help which they ſee withdrawn from thoſe who are already

ready embarked; and therefore, they think of other plans of buſineſs.

To be more particular, the number of thoſe who have completely ſettled plantations in the new iſlands, is very ſmall. There is not at this time, above the tenth part of the lands in thoſe three iſlands, upon an average, under cultivation; and, of that tenth, there is, probably, one third belonging to perſons who have not yet erected works, nor are able to do ſo unleſs aſſiſted by loans: and I believe it will be allowed that no perſon, let his Weſt-India property be ever ſo great, can raiſe any money at preſent in London, any other way than by ſelling annuities at a price which, unleſs a plague ſoon ſweep off the annuitants, or their nominees, muſt prove ruinous to the planter; ſo that there is not the leaſt proſpect of being able to ſettle thoſe iſlands by the means of any funds now within the Britiſh dominions: therefore, it may be ſaid, that government has undertaken to ſettle thoſe iſlands as ſugar colonies, and yet, there is not, in the whole nation, the means of doing it. There is at preſent due from the purchaſers of lands in Tobago to the crown at leaſt ſixty thouſand pounds for inſtallments, which ought to have been paid long ago; beſides a much larger ſum to become payable at a future time. Dominico, I'm informed, is even much more in debt to the crown, than Tobago. The lands that were ſold at the laſt ſales amount to an immenſe ſum, of which very little has been paid: and, I believe moſt of the purchaſers are unable to pay the inſtallments that are to become due, and ſtill more

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ſo to comply with the conditions of culture and ſettlement mentioned in their ſeveral deeds of ſale and grants from the crown. The greateſt part of the lands in the new iſlands muſt, therefore, revert to the crown, without being paid for, and muſt remain uncultivated, and uſeleſs to the nation, unleſs ſome means can be deviſed to procure loans to enable the purchaſers of thoſe lands to ſettle them. This leads me, my lord, to conſider the policy of the law now moved for.

I take it for granted, that, ſhould ſuch a law paſs, loans might be procured from foreigners, for the purpoſe of ſettling the new iſlands; becauſe, I imagine, the gentlemen who are ſo active for the bill, would not give themſelves the trouble they have done, unleſs they had great expectations of its having the deſired effect. If it be urged, that there is no certainty of loans from foreigners, but that, on the contrary, a ſtrong preſumption ariſes againſt the probability of obtaining ſuch loans, from the recent failures in Holland; I conceive no kind of argument againſt the bill can be drawn from that circumſtance: For, if the bill ſhould not have the effect which the patrons of it wiſh, it cannot be in any reſpect hurtful to the nation, or to any individual, but, after paſſing through a ſtate of probation, will reſt undiſturbed, with the mouldering records of many former well intended, but ineffectual acts of the legiſlature. Upon a ſuppoſition, however, that the act ſhould enable the planters to procure loans from foreigners to ſettle their plantations, I ſhall conſider what the probable

probable conſequences of ſuch loans will be to the nation in general, and whether they may affect the individuals who are now forming themſelves into a *phalanx* to make a ſtand againſt the bill or not?

I conceive, my lord, that the increaſe of money, by loans from foreigners, would have the moſt happy effects on our ſhipping, commerce, and manufactures. The African merchant, who now trembles on the arrival of every veſſel in the trade, leſt he ſhould have no returns but bills to be proteſted, and ſhudders at the thoughts of another voyage, would then reſume his former courage, and refit his now uſeleſs ſhips. The Weſt India merchant, who, ſince the late failures in this great city, avoids the proprietors of lands in the new iſlands as peſtilential, would ſeek their acquaintance, and ſend out his veſſels with all kinds of merchandize, to anſwer the neceſſary and indiſpenſable demands of the planter, in full hopes of receiving payment, in the uſual courſe, and a loading of ſugars in return. A great demand for all kinds of plantation utenſils and implements would increaſe our manufactures; and, at the ſame time that hundreds of bold enterprizing ſubjects would be cultivating the rich and grateful ſoil of the plantations, thouſands of poor perſons would be employed here, in manufacturing for the coloniſts, and paid with the money ſo to be borrowed It is conceived that ſuch loans would not occaſion any riſe in the price of negroes, or utenſils uſed in planting; for, ſhould the law now in contemplation take place, numbers of merchants who

who formerly traded to Africa with profit and advantage to themſelves, but, have of late withdrawn from the trade, as dangerous and unprofitable, would again adventure with greater hopes of ſucceſs than ever; many others too, who never before engaged in the African trade, would join them, by which means the number of negroes that would be imported into the new iſlands would be equal to the demand, and conſequently prevent the price from riſing to any hurtful degree. The manufactures, which the ſettlers would take off, could not, it is ſuppoſed, occaſion any increaſe in the price of thoſe articles. It is not right to fear that a great demand for all articles of commerce, and under all circumſtances indiſcriminately, would raiſe the value: A temporary call for a commodity, diſproportioned to the quantity at market, will affect the price; but a regular and conſtant conſumption, though increaſed at any certain epoch, will only be attended with a proportionable increaſe of produce, or manufacture, provided ſuch produce or manufacture be capable of a proportionable increaſe, which, I am ſure, every one will allow to be the caſe here. There is, therefore, no reaſon to apprehend an advance in the price of negroes, or manufactures; on the contrary, it is preſumed, that as the planters will be enabled by foreign loans, to make more punctual and regular payments, they will be ſupplied better, and at a cheaper rate than they now are. The merchant and manufacturer, at preſent, as if dealing with an heir apparent in expectancy only, under the uncertainty of his being ever able to pay, increaſe their prices to the planter

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in proportion to the riſque they run of not being paid; which would not be the caſe, could the latter procure a loan ſufficient to bring his plantation to perfection. The money that would be borrowed would immediately center and ſoon circulate in this kingdom: A great part of it would be applied to the payment of bills already drawn by the planter, which are now lying under proteſt; and the reſt would find its way to the colonies in negroes and manufactures only. At preſent the ſettler, who is here in vain ſoliciting a loan, and who, though he has undiſmayed ſeen death in a thouſand ſhapes beyond the line, yet ſinks into a mere inſignificant animal at the ſight of his creditor, would then reſume his proper dignity, and meet his agent on equal terms of mutual advantage and convenience. The revenue alſo, my lord, would by the means of ſuch loans be conſiderably encreaſed.

I am informed, my lord, that two claſſes of men in this kingdom join in oppoſing the bill, from an apprehenſion that, ſhould it paſs into a law, their private and particular intereſts may be affected by it. One is, the rich proprietors of lands in the old iſlands, who now live in ſplendor, and with a princely magnificence, while their brethren between the tropicks ſpend their lives in toiling for a mere ſubſiſtence, alternately expoſed to the ſcorching heats of the day, and the chilling damps of the night: The other is compoſed of the merchants who are Weſt India agents. The firſt think, that ſhould money be eaſily obtained from foreigners by the planters, the increaſe of ſugar would be ſo great as to reduce

duce the price, and conſequently leſſen their yearly incomes. The laſt, who have long taſted the ſweets of ſugar-conſignments, are apprehenſive, that, ſhould foreigners be enabled to lend money in the colonies, they would ſend agents to reſide in London, and thereby ſupplant them. I conceive, my lord, that the fears of both are groundleſs, and that neither of them can be in the leaſt degree hurt by any effect which the bill may have.

The produce of our colonies would, with the help of ſuch loans be greatly increaſed, but then ſuch increaſe would be gradual and ſlow. No man, let his induſtry and his fortune be ever ſo great, can make ſugar from land in woods with any degree of advantage to himſelf, in leſs than four years; and it often happens, that, notwithſtanding all the care and diligence that can be exerted, accidents and calamities incident to ſuch undertakings prevent the planter for ſeveral years more from receiving the long wiſhed for returns. The conſumption of ſugar is every day increaſing in Europe and America, and it is thought will ſtill continue to do ſo; it is therefore impoſſible that, even ſuppoſing loans ſhould be got immediately upon the paſſing ſuch a law, the price of ſugar would be in any conſiderable degree affected. To illuſtrate this, we need only have a retroſpect to the prices of ſugar, and the quantity imported to London from the Britiſh Weſt Indies, for ſeven years back, and attend to the progreſs which the new iſlands have made during that time. It appears by the entries in the cuſtom-houſe, that the quantity has

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increaſed conſiderably every year, inſomuch that the imports of 1771 exceed thoſe of 1765 by 30,000 hogſheads and upwards, of which a ſmall quantity only has been exported; and yet the price of ſugar varied but little during the whole ſeven years. The imports in 1772 have exceeded that of any former year; and though the price fell very conſiderably, yet it was not owing to the increaſed quantity at market, but principally to the failures of many conſiderable bankers and merchants, which cauſed a ſtop to paper circulation, and made money extremely valuable. Thoſe who were poſſeſſed of real currency, taking advantage of the diſtreſs of ſome agents who were obliged to ſell at all events, bought ſugars at their own price, and conſequently very low. This was not, however, peculiar to the article of ſugar alone: the diſtreſſes of the times had the ſame effect on many other commodities. It was otherwiſe at Briſtol, which was not affected by the bankruptcies of this place: there, ſugars ſold from 10 to 20 *per cent.* above this market. Many merchants there ſent large ſums to London, and bought ſugars in order to be carried round, and others, together with merchants in Exeter, bought ſugars and ſtored them, with a view to ſell again, when the price ſhould riſe, and their ſchemes in general ſucceeded. I have authority from an eminent Weſt India merchant in Briſtol, to ſay, that he ſaw ſamples of ſugar bought there for twenty nine ſhillings and ſix pence, in order to be carried round to Briſtol, which, had they arrived, would have ſold for forty ſhillings per hundred weight, but they were loſt at ſea. The

laſt ſummer having been very unfavourable to all kinds of Engliſh fruit, is another concurring cauſe of the fall of ſugar. The increaſe of produce in the new iſlands has not, I may venture to affirm, been yet able to affect the price. Let us attend to the progreſs thoſe iſlands have made for ſeven years back, during which time the planters have borrowed money with greater facility than they probably ever will be able to do again. Dominico and St. Vincents had a great deal of land cleared, and even plantations ſettled when the French gave up their pretenſions to thoſe iſlands. Tobago, altho' altogether in woods at that epoch, went on with amazing rapidity; and yet the whole produce of the three iſlands imported here, in this, the ſeventh year of their ſettlement as ſugar iſlands, is not ſufficient to ſweeten the apple-pies and tarts made in England in one year. It is computed that nine thouſand hoſheads of ſugar *per annum* are conſumed in that way, a quantity which has never yet been imported in one year from all the iſlands which are the objects of this bill: the principal part of the increaſed quantity of ſugar for ſeven years paſt, has come from Jamaica and Granada, both which iſlands are brought to great perfection, and may be ſaid to be in their prime: It is now high time that their younger ſiſters ſhould be uſhered into the world, and accompliſhed as children of the ſame parent. There is the greater reaſon for taking notice of theſe laſt, and giving them an opportunity of diſplaying the charms which nature has ſo bountifully beſtowed on them, becauſe ſome of their elder ſiſters are on the decline, and like decaying beauties, are

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in vain endeavouring, by every poſſible art to ſupply the want of youth and bloom. It is certain that ſome of the old iſlands are daily falling off, and that Dominico is more adapted to the culture of coffee and cocoa than ſugar; the additional quantity then, to be expected from the other two iſlands cannot be thought capable of influencing the market, when we conſider the rapid increaſe of population in our American colonies, and that this article is now deemed, even by the very loweſt claſs of the people, in the remote parts of Great Britain and Ireland, as a real neceſſary of life. The rich, who formerly made uſe of ſugar, finding it greatly conducive to health, now daily encreaſe the conſumption by various ways; and the poor ſubſtitute different innocent infuſions ſweetened with ſugar inſtead of ſpirits and fermented liquors which they formerly drank to the deſtruction of their conſtitutions. Sugar is making its way too into the extenſive empire of Ruſſia, which, it is thought, will in a few years take off from us an immenſe quantity of that produce; ſo that the proprietors of eſtates in the old iſlands need not fear a diminution of the price, from any increaſe of produce in the new iſlands, which there is the greateſt reaſon to believe will not keep pace with the increaſe of conſumption. Sugar is, at this time, dearer than when our ſugar colonies did not yield half the quantity they now do; a clear proof that our conſumption has outrun our increaſe of produce.

I think it is not probable, my lord, that, in caſe this bill ſhould paſs, foreigners would

ſend over agents to ſettle in England for the purpoſe of receiving the conſignments. Every planter will naturally apply to the houſe in London with which he is connected, or beſt acquainted, to procure a loan for him; ſuch houſe will find out the proper channel through which a loan can be obtained; and the foreigner, who may be inclined to place his money out at intereſt, will inquire into the ſufficiency of the merchant here, and the planter's ability to ſecure the principal and intereſt, without giving himſelf the trouble of enquiring where either drew the firſt breath. The greateſt part of the money is expected from perſons who either have retired, or are retiring from trade, and now only think of placing the wealth which they have acquired with the greateſt ſafety and advantage to themſelves: ſuch perſons will hardly ever ſend agents here, in order to receive the conſignments; they would, by doing ſo, loſe the benefit of a good collateral ſecurity. A foreign agent ſent over here could afford none equal to that of an eſtabliſhed houſe of reputation; nor would the planter chuſe to let his effects go into the hands of one who may be a ſtranger to the buſineſs, leſt he ſhould ſuffer by ignorance, or inability in the agent. The very idea of ſecurity aſſociated with that of a middleman of reputation in London, between the borrower and lender, is ſufficient to exclude that of a foreign agent; and would occaſion all the loans to be obtained without the interpoſition of any ſuch perſon. It cannot be expected that any one mercantile houſe abroad will be able to draw from its own trade, and lend here,

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ſums ſufficient to procure conſignments large enough to make a Weſt-India agency an object worthy of notice: if any houſe of credit ſhould be ſo inclined, and the commiſſion on ſales of ſugars ſhould be thought of importance enough to engage their attention, there is nothing in our ſyſtem of laws to prevent their doing ſo now, without the aid of the intended act. There are at preſent a great number of foreign merchants reſident amongſt us, who have a right to be conſignees of ſugars, and connuſees of judgments: and any foreigner that may come here properly recommended, may eaſily get naturalized, and can, then, take mortgages. But even ſhould the bill, notwithſtanding what I have above advanced, be thought to have a tendency to encourage foreign agents to come and reſide here; ſo far is that from being a conſequence to be guarded againſt, that, viewed in a national light, it will be conſidered as one of the greateſt benefits that can be derived by the bill. Every meaſure, by which ſubjects of foreign ſtates are encouraged to leave their own countries and ſettle here, has had the ſupport of every friend to the nation, and has been attended with the moſt ſalutary effects. None would object to the preſent bill on that account, but avaricious men, who view every object through the contracted medium of their own intereſt. I hope, however, that your lordſhip, and the reſt of the members of the Britiſh ſenate, will ſee the matter in its proper point of view, and not with the jaundiced eye of theſe intereſted opponents. The Dutch, ſhould they ſettle here as Weſt India

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agents, would bring wealth, induſtry, and frugality along with them; all which we ſtand much in need of at preſent: and if, by means of the two laſt, they ſhould make an addition to the firſt, among us, there is no reaſon to fear that they will return to Holland to ſpend it. No people, after ſome years ſucceſsful reſidence here, are ſo eaſily weaned as the Dutch, from their own country; and none, I may add, make more loyal ſubjects, or more valuable citizens than they do in England.

It has been objected to this bill, my lord, that enabling the Dutch to lend money on Weſt-India property would give birth to ſmuggling, and prevent the produce of the plantations from being ſent to Great-Britain. There can be nothing more truly ridiculous than this objection. It is well known, that Great-Britain is by much the beſt market in Europe for ſugar; and, therefore, it cannot be ſuppoſed that the planters would turn away from their natural and lawful market, and, merely for the ſake of carrying on an illicite trade, ſmuggle to a worſe. By the act of 12 Geo. II. chap. 30. and an additional act thereto, ſugar can be legally exported in veſſels of a certain tonnage, from the colonies directly to any part of Europe ſouth of Cape Finiſterre, and to any part north of that Cape, upon touching at Great-Britain; and yet no perſon I believe ever attempts to make a trial of the foreign markets, which under thoſe acts may be lawfully reſorted to.

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Thus I have, my lord, given, I hope, a full and ſatisfactory anſwer to the objections made to this bill. I muſt now beg leave to recall your lordſhip's attention to the preſent ſtate of the ſugar colonies, old as well as new.

Although the bill is objected to by the rich proprietors of lands in the old iſlands, whoſe overgrown fortunes enable them to live here in ſplendor, yet, I am very certain, that all thoſe who reſide in the Weſt Indies, to a man, would be very glad that ſuch an avenue might be opened to loans as is intended by this bill. I have lived many years in one of the old iſlands, which is extremely populous and well cultivated, and, from my long reſidence and intimate acquaintance with the planters, I know the circumſtance of their eſtates. It is very common for an induſtrious and frugal man, in the courſe of a long and laborious life, to acquire a valuable ſugar plantation, which upon his death is generally left to his eldeſt ſon, paying certain ſums to the younger children. One or two bad crops, after the father's death, brings the eldeſt ſon into this dilemma: he muſt either keep from the younger children the proviſion which their father intended them, which would be injurious and highly detrimental to them, or ſuffer the negroes and moveables on the eſtate to be ſold to pay their legacies, which would be ruinous to him; for the land, when the ſtock is taken off, would be worth but little. He could not be relieved by ſelling his plantation, under ſuch circumſtances: for, in the Weſt-Indies, plantations are ſeldom or ever ſold for ready money.

money. The method is to make the payments by inſtallments at diſtant periods, and very little money, if any at all, is paid down. The heir's only relief could be from a loan to pay the younger children's fortunes, for which he could give the ſecurity of the eſtate; and by that means, and none other, he could ſave his plantation, and ſet his brothers and ſiſters forward in the world. Formerly ſuch loans could be eaſily procured: the merchants, if they had no money themſelves, could borrow from others at a low rate, and lend to the planters at the colony rate of intereſt: but now, when paper circulation, and confidence is, in a great meaſure, at an end, and people poſſeſſed of money find ſuch a field for uſing it to advantage at home, there is not a ſhilling to be borrowed for the uſe of the old iſlands in the uſual way. I know ſeveral families who have been ruined, lately, in one of the old iſlands, who might have been now in happy circumſtances could they have been ſeaſonably aſſiſted with loans; and many others are, at this time, on the brink of deſtruction, who poſſibly may be ſaved by the paſſing of this bill. The bad crops that have been made for ſeveral years paſt, in ſome of the old iſlands, have occaſioned almoſt a general want of money, and the iſlands which were ſo fortunate as to make tolerable crops, have been lately viſited by an hurricane, which has done immenſe damage to buildings and ſugar-works. This cannot be repaired for a long time, and without borrowing conſiderable ſums. The ſcene of diſtreſs which this exhibits, affords the planters, who are extremely rich, a proſpect of raiſing

ſtill greater fortunes from the ruin of others: but I hope the labours of the honeſt and induſtrious planter, who lives on the ſpot which he owns, will not be ſacrificed to pleaſe and gratify the rich who live here.

The new iſlands contain extenſive tracts of luxuriant fine ſoil, which are very improveable, but with large ſums of money only, which the perſons willing to ſettle have not, nor can obtain from their fellow-ſubjects here; and unleſs a civil war (which God forbid ſhould ever again break out in theſe kingdoms) force men of fortune to leave their native homes, and ſeek an aſylum in the colonies, it cannot be expected that wealthy perſons ſhould become ſettlers. I muſt obſerve alſo, that the preſent terms of ſettlement are not at all calculated to make theſe colonies flouriſh, nor does the almoſt total neglect of Tobago give any favourable impreſſion of the diſpoſition of government to that infant colony. The new iſlands, therefore, notwithſtanding all the pains that have been taken, and the money that has been laid out in clearing them, muſt gradually dwindle, and at laſt cover themſelves with their native woods, if government does not take them into its immediate favour and protection: and unleſs it can be ſaid, that the miniſtry of king George III. are as attentive to colonization, and to the advancement of navigation, commerce, and manufactures, and conſequently to the increaſe of the revenue, as theſe of king Charles II.

One thing more, my lord, I muſt beg leave to mention, which I think highly proper for

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your lordſhip's conſideration : The commiſſion for ſelling the lands in the new iſlands commenced in 1764, and has been ever ſince kept on foot at the expence of *twenty thouſand pounds per annum* to government, including the ſalaries of commiſſioners, of a receiver, ſecretary, ſurveyors, and negroes to attend them, and the travelling charges of the commiſſioners from one iſland to another, all payable out of the monies received for the lands. This commiſſion has not, at preſent, any other object than the Caraib lands in St. Vincents, all the other lands having been already ſold : and as the king's troops are now employed in expelling the Caraibs, it is preſumed theſe lands may be eaſily ſold, in the courſe of this year, when the commiſſion would be fully executed : but, unleſs ſome means ſhall be contrived to procure loans to enable the purchaſers of lands in the new iſlands to carry on their ſettlements, the commiſſion will not be without objects for many years to come : for by much the greateſt part of the lands already ſold will revert to the crown, and muſt be ſold a ſecond time, though probably not for a ſum ſufficient to defray the annual expences of the commiſſion.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient

Humble Servant,

A WEST-INDIA PLANTER.

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